

# How Brain Diversity Can Benefit Your Organization

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Neighborhood & Community Summit

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# Overview

Objectives | Intro

Definitions & “Disclaimers”

Problem & Purpose

Challenges v. Opportunities

Considerations & Recommendations

Conclusion | Q & A

References & Resources

# Objectives

By the end of this workshop, you will know:

the definitions of neurodivergent (ND), neurotypical, & neurodiversity

examples of neurodivergence (i.e., brain differences)

how organizations can be more ND-inclusive

organizational benefits of embracing neurodiversity

# Personal Introduction



# What do Industrial/Organizational (I/O) Psychologists do?



Apply the principles of psychology to the workplace



Use the scientific method to study issues and conduct research about work



Apply research findings to the design of organizational, group, and individual activities at work

Source: Industrial-Organizational Psychology. (2018, August 28). Retrieved from <https://www.siop.org/Events-Education/Educators/Incorporating-I-O>

# Definitions

## Neurodivergent

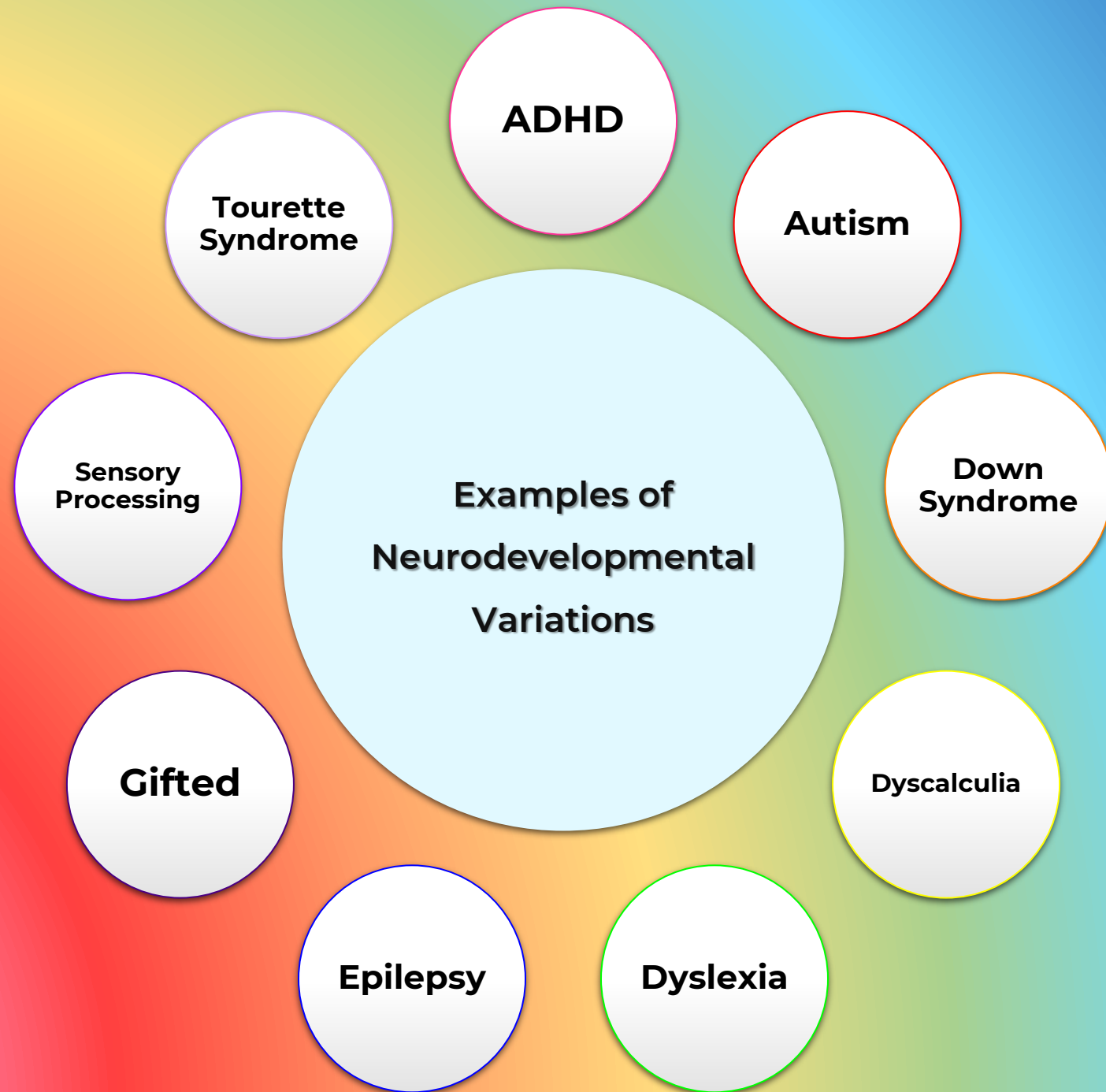
- 🧠 nonmedical term
- 🧠 refers to people whose brains work differently from what is “typical”

## Neurotypical

- 🧠 nonmedical term
- 🧠 refers to people whose brains work in ways considered “typical”

## Neurodiversity

- 🧠 refers to the diversity in the human brain and how it works





# Disclaimers

- 🧠 The content of this presentation is based, in part, on my lived experience in personal, academic, and professional contexts.
- 🧠 There are disagreements over which terms properly reflect the wide variation of conditions that fall under the umbrella of neurodivergence.



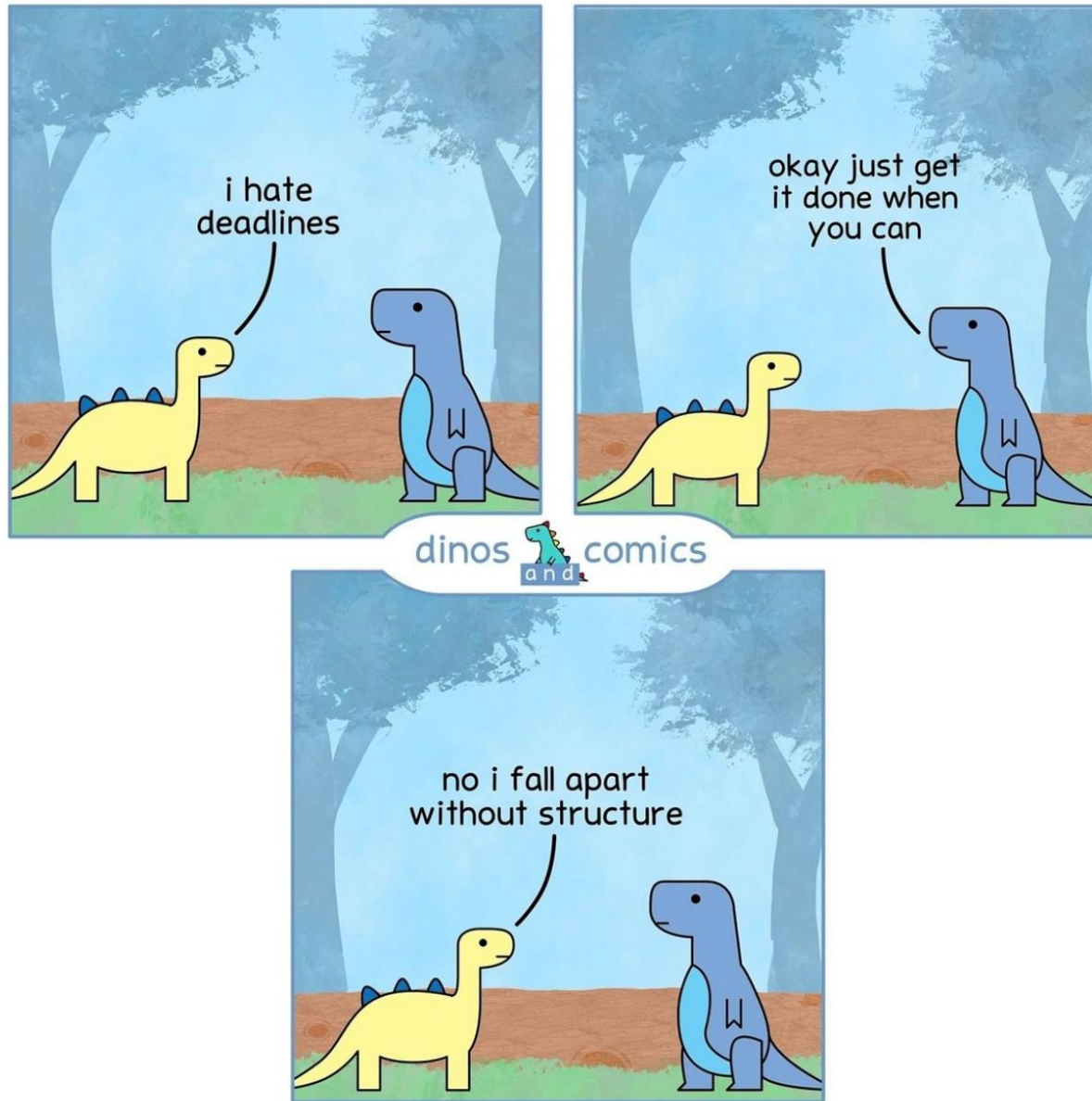
# The Problem

- 🧠 The lack of inclusive organizational cultures/climates for neurodivergent people contributes to:
  - ∞ High unemployment and underemployment for neurodivergent people
  - ∞ Less creativity/innovation and more risk of groupthink for organizations

# Purpose

🧠 To spark conversation on how we can promote inclusion (by embracing neurodiversity) within organizations

∞ *In addition to* formal organizational policies



# Potential Challenges

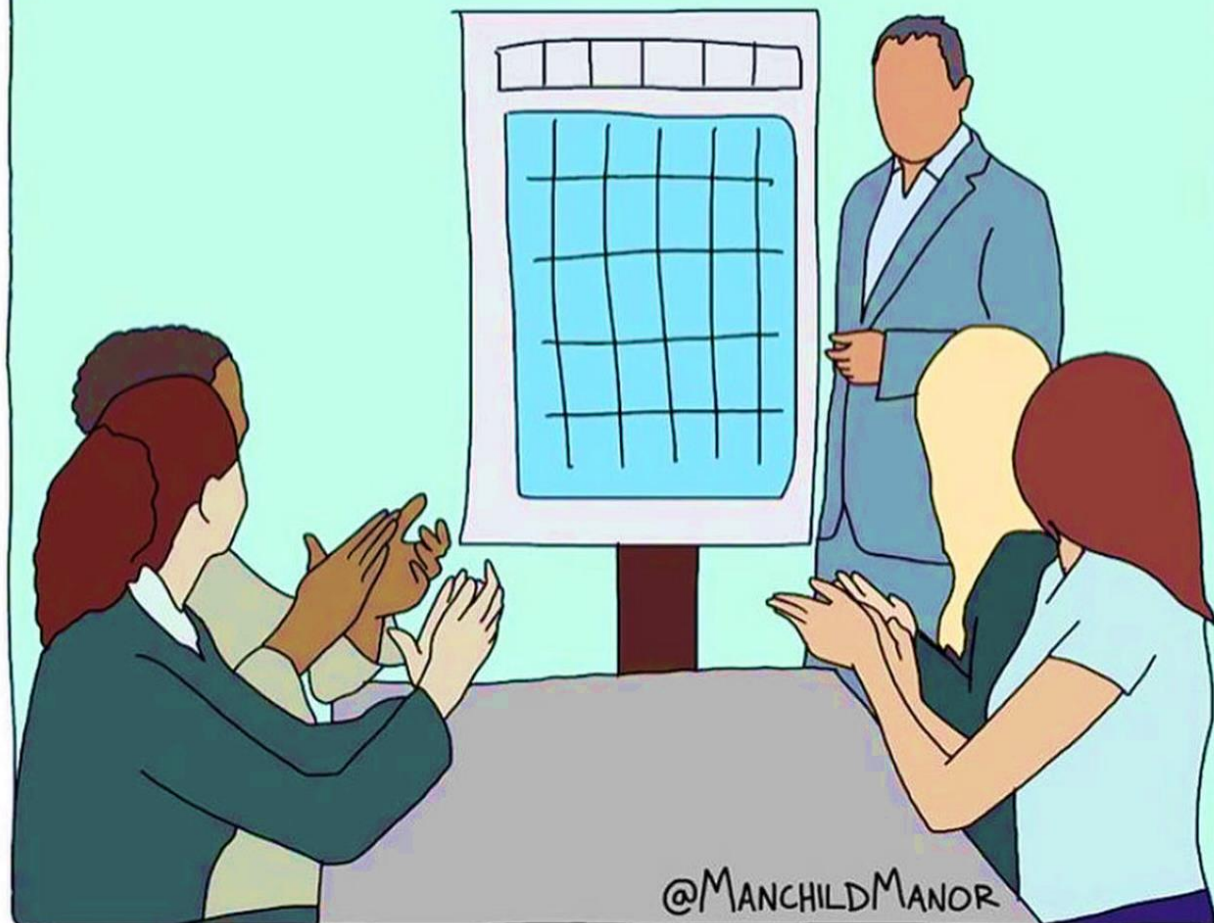
- 🧠 Disruption to traditional notions of how workplaces must function
- 🧠 Requires an openness to changes in perspective and in how things are done
- 🧠 Temporary issues of miscommunication, conflict, etc. between organizational members (e.g., within teams)

# Opportunities

- 🧠 Unique skills
  - ∞ e.g., creativity, “out-of-the-box” thinking, ability to work well under pressure, attention to detail, pattern recognition
- 🧠 Help to identify organizational issues that others might overlook
- 🧠 Increased pool of talent
  - ∞ i.e., an organization’s demonstrated commitment to being more inclusive can attract other prospective employees to that organization
- 🧠 Organizational loyalty (lower turnover)



So I've called this meeting to determine  
when we're all available for another meeting.



# Points to Consider

🧠 What informal organizational practices can be made more ND-inclusive?

- ∞ Schedules
- ∞ Work Environment
- ∞ Meetings, Meetings, Meetings!
- ∞ Team-building Activities
- ∞ Training Methods



# General Recommendations

- 🧠 Remember that “different” does not mean “wrong.”
  - ∞ Focus on the strengths that ND employees bring to the organization.
- 🧠 Remove unnecessary organizational barriers.
  - ∞ What are the core job functions?
- 🧠 Ask, rather than make assumptions about an individual’s capabilities.
- 🧠 I/O Lesson: There is no “one best way...”
  - ∞ Be flexible and adaptable.

# Conclusion

- 🧠 Making the workplace more ND-inclusive is beneficial to *all* employees.
- 🧠 “...it is estimated that around 10% of the population is neurodivergent, so employers that do not adapt their climates to support neurodiversity...are missing out on the talent that research shows increases the creativity, innovation, productivity, and resilience of their workforce...” (Volpone, Avery, & Wayne, 2022 | “Shaping Organizational Climates to Develop and Leverage Workforce Neurodiversity”)

# Q & A



# References

- 🧠 Industrial-Organizational Psychology. (2018, August 28). Retrieved from <https://www.siop.org/Events-Education/Educators/Incorporating-I-O>
- 🧠 Volpone, S. D., Avery, D. R., & Wayne, J. H. (2022). Shaping organizational climates to develop and leverage workforce neurodiversity. In S. M. Bruyère & A. Colella (Eds.), *Neurodiversity in the Workplace: Interests, Issues, and Opportunities*. Routledge: New York. DOI: 10.4324/9781003023616-2

# Resources

- 🧠 [additudemag.com](https://additudemag.com)
- 🧠 [andnextcomesl.com](https://andnextcomesl.com)
- 🧠 [apa.org](https://apa.org)
- 🧠 [livedexperienceeducator.com/freestuff](https://livedexperienceeducator.com/freestuff)
- 🧠 [neurodiversityhub.org/resources](https://neurodiversityhub.org/resources)
- 🧠 [neurodiversityweek.com/resource-hub](https://neurodiversityweek.com/resource-hub)
- 🧠 [pixabay.com](https://pixabay.com)
- 🧠 [siop.org](https://siop.org)